

**DELAWARE COMMISSION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 19, 2007**

Members Present: Morris, Ennis, Carroll, Endres, Harden, Kitson, Lank, Lardizzone, Magner, Newstadt, Spitzfaden, Wasson and Webb

Members Excused: Thompson and Timberman

Staff Present: Quinlan and Dole (DVH)

Guests: Al Carter (SOS), Bill Duncan (Delaware Military Heritage & Education Foundation), Ben Gottfried (USAWOA), and Beth & Dalton Berrie (UPS Store)

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to our Nations Flag.

Chairman opened the meeting by thanking the Secretary of State's office for the marvelous Veterans Home Ribbon-cutting Ceremony on June 13, 2007. Introduced guests.

Mr. Duncan provided a briefing concerning the Delaware Military Heritage & Education Foundation. Asked the Commission to provide guidance as to fundraising activities among the veterans and for the military museum. They are also seeking nominations for persons to serve on both their Board and Capital Campaign Committee (provided information packet).

Ms. Quinlan reported that there are 91 employees now at the Veterans Home. The Home website has been updated, to include a FAQ page, press coverage link, and photos. They will also be developing a page specifically for donations (donation list provided for approval). Currently, inspectors are in the Home conducting licensure inspections for long-term care resident protection. Commissioner Endres went through a mock admission process, which assisted staff with ironing out procedures. Chairman Morris stated that the emergency call procedure worked well during the evacuation due to the sprinkler head going off when it became overheated by the skylight. He was also contacted in a timely manner when a resident was discharged and readmitted. Ms. Quinlan stated the Veterans Home Library is full; so they can only accept audio books. Commissioner Carroll stated that it would be appropriate for the donation list to be added to the website and that process should be expedited. Commissioner Lank questioned the obligation that we have when we receive donations and when it comes time for disposal. Mr. Carter stated that the Friends of the Veterans Home is developing a protocol in terms of gifts. The policy for donations will have to state that it becomes the property of the State of Delaware once we accept it and it can be disposed of at our discretion. Chairman Morris reported that Tony Davila and Dean Reid are working on the procedure for recognition of donated items.

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER CARROLL TO APPROVE THE VETERANS HOME DONATIONS LIST, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER LARDIZZONE, MOTION CARRIED.

Mr. Gottfried reported that the United States Army Warrant Officers Association will be donating the supplies and building two gazebos at the Veterans Home. They have also donated books to the Home of the Brave, and plan to donate some clothing and phone & gift cards. On August 12, 2007, they are sponsoring a Texas Hold-em tournament at the Lobby House in Dover. The funds raised will be used

in support of the Veterans Home, Home of the Brave, and a scholarship fund for military dependents in the State of Delaware. They will also be hosting a golf tournament in September 2007 (information forthcoming).

Ms. Dole, temporary Activities Coordinator for the Veterans Home, provided a “Quality of Life” briefing. The Veterans Home staff will know each individual resident and their needs to provide the quality care they deserve. Commissioner Carroll asked Ms. Dole to discuss the Veterans Home calendar that was provided at the last Steering Committee meeting.

Commissioner Endres shared his experience of the mock admission process. He expressed a special “thank you” to Carolyn Bess for her care and treatment during his stay. He was very comfortable and complimented the Veterans Home staff for the service provided.

Ms. Berrie asked if the Veterans Home will allow pet visitation from family members. Ms. Dole stated they are currently writing policy on pets and therapy pets.

Ms. Berrie asked if any service organization could provide assistance with transportation for her father to attend his granddaughter’s wedding. Commissioner Newstadt suggested she contact the Greenwood Fire Company. Ms. Dole suggested she contact KSI or United Way. Ms. Berrie’s son, Dalton, attended the Commission meeting as an assignment in support of the upcoming People to People Leadership Summit.

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER MAGNER TO ACCEPT MAY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER WASSON, MOTION CARRIED.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

CEMETERY COMMITTEE

Newstadt – Received very good feedback concerning the condition of the Cemetery on Memorial Day; the staff is doing a great job. The Family Advisory Cemetery Committee (FACC) will meet at the Southern Cemetery on August 22, 2007, 6:00 pm. The next Northern FACC meeting will be on October 17, 2007, 1:00 pm. They have resolved the change of markers, which was rather controversial. It was a disappointment that they had in fact weathered and sun-faded so rapidly after installation.

COMMEMORATIVE AFFAIRS

No report.

FINANCE AND LOGISTICS

No report.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Carroll – The Veterans Home fund balance is \$75,108.77 and the Friends of the Delaware Veterans Home fund balance is \$486,672.00. Provided a handout (available on the Veterans Home website)

pertaining to questions about costs and charges for the Veterans Home and discussion followed. Commissioner Newstadt asked about the status of adult day-care. Commissioner Carroll responded that the issue will be reviewed in the near future. Chairman Morris added that every veteran being admitted into the Home needs to be assessed by an accredited service officer, whether it's a service officer from the Commission or the veterans' service organizations. The Steering Committee, per say, has been disbanded; their work has been essentially accomplished. The Health and Human Services Committee of the Commission will be meeting on July 11, 2007, 2:00 pm, at the Veterans Home, to continue with some issues. Mr. Carter added that the Secretary's office will provide support through September because we have some outstanding issues that need to be resolved. Mr. Carter will be unable to attend the meeting on July 11, 2007, but will send a representative.

Commission discussed the request for a residency waiver for Mr. Bobby Massey (submitted by his daughter, Ms. Lydia Prigg) for admission into the Veterans Home. The Commission established the three-year residency requirement and will hold to it. This issue will be revisited once the Home has been operating for 18-months. The Commission also decided not to allow spouses at this time.

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER NEWSTADT FOR THE COMMISSION TO ADDRESS A LETTER TO MS. PRIGG STATING THE THREE-YEAR RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT WILL NOT BE WAIVED AT THIS TIME, SECONDED BY LARDIZZONE, MOTION CARRIED.

Commissioner Carroll, after speaking to Karen Cavanaugh, VAVS Coordinator, learned that the Dover Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC), which is presently in the planning and development stage, will need volunteers to help staff with telephones and assist veterans with paperwork. Anyone interested in volunteering would have to attend training at the VA. Chairman Morris added that the Volunteer Services Coordinator for the Veterans Home, Mr. Dan Uncles, has a meeting set-up with Karen Cavanaugh. Commissioner Lardizzone stated that the real estate agent who is handling the Dover clinic is also handling the clinic in Georgetown. The building in Georgetown is being renovated and will be open by October 1, 2007. The Georgetown clinic will combine the clinics in Millsboro and Seaford.

Chairman Morris was contacted by an intern working at WHYY and she is currently working on a project to interview WWII veterans. If there is anyone interested, have them contact the Commission office for additional information.

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

Chairman Morris discussed SB 129 & 130, both dealing with English as the official language for the State.

MONUMENTS & MEMORIALS

No report.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

No report.

BY-LAWS

No report.

PERSONNEL

CHAIRMAN MORRIS CALLED FOR AN EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 12:15 PM TO DISCUSS AND REVIEW AN EMPLOYEE REQUEST FOR REINSTATEMENT.

Commission meeting resumed at 12:40 pm.

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER LANK TO ACCEPT EMPLOYEE'S RESIGNATION AND NO FURTHER ACTION WILL BE TAKEN, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KITSON, 12 YEAS AND 1 NAY, MOTION CARRIED.

Employee will be notified by mail that his resignation has been accepted.

ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS

Newstadt (JWV) – The Veterans Home has accepted our donation of two 75-gallon aquariums. We hope to get a maintenance contract to take care of the aquariums. Received notification that the entrance lobby area of the VA Home in Elsmere is going to be renovated, and as such, we are intending to purchase a large television for that area. The JWV will meet on June 24, 2007, and Richard Citron, VA Medical Director, will be our guest speaker. Annual picnic is scheduled for August 12, 2007, in Talley Day Park on Faulk Road.

Chairman Morris, on behalf of the Commission, commended the JWV for the press coverage they received for their memorial located in the Jewish Community Center.

Endres (40 & 8) – Provided a \$1,000 scholarship to a nurse graduating from DTCC in Georgetown.

Wasson (DELVETS) – On Saturday, May 26, 2007, DELVETS held a Memorial Day celebration, honoring the parents, grandparents and families of service members, particularly Afghanistan and Iraq.

Harden (WAVES) – Next meeting is scheduled for June 23, 2007.

Ennis (KWVA) – On June 14, 2007, the KWVA hosted a Flag Day Ceremony at the Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Sussex County. Chapter 1 Honor Guard executed the rifle volley. On June 24, 2007, all Korean War veterans and their families are invited to attend the third Commemorative Church Service and luncheon near Wilmington. June 25, 2007, is Remembrance Day at Rehoboth Beach. They will be having an opening ceremony for the Korean War exhibit at the Rehoboth Beach Library at 11:00 am. There will be a department quarterly meeting at the Rehoboth Beach Library at 11:30 am. There will be a department program at the bandstand at the Rehoboth Beach boardwalk at 8:00 pm. On July 7, 2007, there will be a rally to support the troops, Operation America Rising, at Legislative Hall from 11:00 am – 9:00 pm. On August 28, 2007, there will be an Executive Council meeting at Post 2 at 11:00 am. On September 21, 2007, there will be a Department meeting at Post 2 at 11:00 am. Chapter 1, KWVA, has given out some certificates and awards to the JROTC program.

Lardizzone (DAV) – Attended the New Jersey DAV State Convention. The DAV State Convention for the Department of Delaware is scheduled for June 22-23, 2007, at the Department Headquarters building on Friday and at the Sheraton on Saturday.

Carroll (MOPH) – Received notice that the Postmaster General has reinstated the Purple Heart stamp and is being reissued as a 41 cent stamp. The MOPH Convention was on June 16, 2007, at the Dover AFB Museum. He spoke to various legislators at the Veterans Home ribbon-cutting ceremony in reference to the legislation to establish the Purple Heart Trail.

Magner (AMVETS) – AMVETS Department of Delaware has purchased a flag pole and flags for the Northern Cemetery.

Lank (MOWW) – Presented awards to the JROTC program. They have a picnic coming up next month in Pennsylvania. Attended the Flag Day Ceremony in Lewes and the American Legion did a great job. Also attended a ceremony for the 153rd Military Police Company at the Governor Bacon Health Center, in which Commissioner Lardizzone also attended, as guests of MG Vavala.

Spitzfaden (MOAA) – Hosted the Flag Day Ceremony at the Southern Cemetery and everyone in attendance was well satisfied. Scholarships have been given out and the amount has been changed from \$500 to \$1,000. MOAA is pushing for SB 95, which allows military retirees to receive their retirement pay and not be subject to Delaware taxes.

Morris (American Legion) – Will be donating approximately 65 rocking chairs to the Veterans Home. The State Convention will take place next month in preparation for the National Convention. There is disgruntlement within the American Legion community about being left out from the Veterans Home ribbon-cutting ceremony and the cost of going into the Home. He explained that the Commission is an administrative arm of the Secretary of State and the Governor and if they have concerns as a veteran and a representative organization they may submit a letter. It had been expressed by this body that we would have liked to have seen at least the commanders of the state organizations invited, but that did not happen.

Lank – An open house should be staged strictly for the leadership of the posts and chapters.

Lardizzone – An open house has been discussed and is being considered for September 2007.

Morris – Received a thank-you letter from the Mayor of Newark to the Commissioners who participated in the Newark Memorial Day Parade. Chairman Morris, on behalf of the Commission, attended a Memorial Day service at a church in Wilmington, in which Commissioner Wasson also attended. Received a letter from the Delaware National Guard Retired Officers Association concerning the residency requirement for the Veterans Home. The Commission will send a response.

Wasson – The American Legion Post 2 and DELVETS Post 2 in Dover, working with the City of Dover, remodeled the Veterans triangle in the downtown area.

Morris – The American Legion Post 2 is sponsoring the 4th of July Parade in the City of Dover.

NEW BUSINESS

Morris – Suggestions for the Commission to review and discuss at the next meeting: 1) Defer Veterans Home information to the Committee and the Committee can bring it to the Commission to curtail lengthy discussions; and 2) possibly change the time to 10:00 am for the Commission meetings.

Carroll – Strongly opposed to shortening discussions concerning Veterans Home issues and not including every member of the Commission.

Morris – The Commission needs to evaluate the length of meetings; two hours may not be enough.

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER HARDEN FOR THE COMMISSION TO START MONTHLY MEETINGS AT 10:00 AM, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER LANK, MOTION CARRIED.

Morris – Will ask Tony Davila to have the meeting time change publicized. The Commission needs to start thinking about upcoming elections for Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

Newstadt – Questioned the status of public health service and the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) being treated as veterans. Discussion followed.

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER CARROLL TO SUBMIT A LETTER SIGNED BY THE CHAIRMAN TO SENATOR BONINI IN SUPPORT OF HB 129 & 130, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER MAGNER, MOTION CARRIED.

Spitzfaden – Questioned financial issues pertaining to admission into the Veterans Home. Discussion followed.

ITEMS FOR THE GOOD AND WELFARE OF THE ORGANIZATION

Newstadt – Stated that you can receive a 10% discount at Home Depot with military ID. Suggested the Commission consider submitting letters to the congressional delegation strongly urging them to assist in getting the SSN removed from military retiree ID cards. Department of Defense has removed the SSN from active duty, reserve and guard ID cards. Discussion followed and the issue will be added to next month's agenda.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: July 24, 2007 (11:00 AM)

**LOCATION: Robbins Bldg, 802 Silver Lake Blvd, Suite 100
Dover, DE**

ADJOURNED